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STAN LEE PRESENTS:

DEAD-POOL

CHAPTER X

BENEDICTION

PART FOUR OF A THREE-PART SERIES!

"DEAR DAD:

"THANKS FOR THE HAT."

IT'S WHAT I *SHOULDA* TOLD 'IM, BABE.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO BALA MENON FOR THE TIMELY ASSISTANCE

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PENNY FOR THY THOUGHTS—?

I WAS THINKIN' ABOUT HOW *NICE* IT WOULD BE IF YOU SENT ME AND *DEATH* ON BACK HOME.

NO OFFENSE, OF COURSE....

NONE *TAKEN*, MY SON.

THE SON OF ODIN DOTH UNDERSTAND THIS REVELATION MUST SEEM A PASSING STRANGE UNTO THEE.

ACTUALLY, *YOU* APPEAR "A PASSING STRANGE..."

...NOT THAT THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT, OF COURSE...

LOOK—

LOKI!

—YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE YOU'RE MY *DAD*, FINE. LET HER GO.

IN DUE *SEASON*.

FOR IT DOTH SERVE ME THAT *DEATH* SHOULD RECLINE THUSLY.

BUT YOU *WILL* LET HER GO.

OF COURSE.

THOU ART MY *ONLY SON*. I CAN DENY THEE *NOTHING*—

—ONCE THOU HAST COMPLETED THY *MISSION*.

I KNEW IT...

...FINE. *WHO* DO YOU WANT *SNUFFED*?

NOTHING LIKE THAT.

FROM AGE TO AGE, THE HOUSE OF LOKI HATH STOOD IN THE *SHADOW* OF THE MOST HIGH ODIN. LONG HATH WE BEEN *DENIED* OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE *REALM*.

THOU SHALT *FINALLY* CHANGE ALL OF THAT.

RIGHT, RIGHT...

...*WHO* DO YOU WANT *SNUFFED*?

SO THOU HAST SAID OFTEN: THOU DIDST KNOW, EVEN AS A *CHILD*, THOU WERT *NOT* LIKE UNTO MERE MORTALS.

THOU DIDST KNOW, INSTINCTIVELY, OF THY *DESTINY*!

OF THE *WEAPON X* REJECTS, *ALONE* DIDST THOU SURVIVE *WHOLE!* AND, THOUGH MEN HATH CALLED THEE *INSANE*—

—*THOU* KNOWEST SUCH IS MERELY *DIVINE REVELATION* AT WORK WITHIN THEE.

FOR *THOU ALONE* KNOWEST THE *TRUTH* OF ALL THESE MATTERS IS—

—NONE OF THIS IS *REALLY HAPPENING.*

THERE IS A MAN...WITH A *TYPEWRITER...*

WHICH MEANS YOU'RE MY FATHER?

A *BETTER* QUESTION FOR THEE WOULD BE—

...HOW DOST THOU KNOW I AM *NOT*—?

CAN I *KEEP* THIS?

BUT OF *COURSE.*

OKAY, "DAD" I'M *IN.*

MAKE YOUR *PLAY.*

SO, I WENT *ALONG* WITH THINGS.

TOLD MYSELF IT WAS TO HELP SAVE *YOU*... NOT THAT YOU WERE MUCH OF A *FRIEND* TO *BEGIN* WITH.

LEFT MY *UMBRELLA*.

16 SAMURAI SWORDS, FIVE HANDGUNS AND SOME TIC-TACS BUT NO *UMBRELLA*.

AND *THAT* GUY.

WHATEVER MY REASONS, NEXT THING I KNEW, IT WAS STANDING IN RUSH HOUR CROWDS NEAR THE CHRYSLER BUILDING--

-- LOOKING UP IN THE SKY...AT MY "UNCLE"...

the mighty THOR

LOKI'S *HALF BROTHER* AND, TO HEAR *HIM* TELL IT, THE LITTLE PUNK WHO WAS ALWAYS SUCKING UP TO *DAD*.

HANDSOME. ADMIRED.

WONDER WHAT *THAT'S* LIKE.

SOME KINDA *FREAK ELECTRICAL PROBLEM* IN THE BUILDING SET SEVERAL FLOORS ON FIRE AND SENT *HIM* TO THE *RESCUE*.

I'VE GONE TO THE RESCUE A TIME OR TWO.

NOT ALL IT'S CRACKED UP T'BE.

THOUGH I *WILL* ADMIT, SOMETHING ABOUT ALL THE GRUNTS *GRINNING* AT YOU *IS* KINDA NICE.

IN *MY* LINE OF WORK, MOST PEOPLE DON'T *APPLAUD*.

BUT, *FABIO BIG HAMMER* THEY *WORSHIPPED*-- LIKE HE WAS A *GOD*.

AND, SUDDENLY, I HAD THIS *TWINGE* IN MY GUT THAT FELT A LITTLE BIT LIKE *ENVY*.

COULDN'T BE *SURE*. COULD BE *ENVY*, COULD BE *TACO BELL*.

BUT, LET'S SAY IT WAS *ENVY*-- MAYBE THAT MADE THE CASE FOR MY BEING LOKI'S SON THAT MUCH *STRONGER*.

I MEAN, THIS WAS A GUY LOKI HAD BEEN KICKED TO THE CURB FOR...FOR *CENTURIES* LOKI WAS DESPISED WHILE HIS *BROTHER* WAS HONORED AND REVERED.

SOUNDED T'ME LIKE, WHATEVER LOKI'S BECOME, IT WAS A *SELF-FULFILLING* PROPHECY.

I MEAN, DROP YOUR KID ON HIS *HEAD* ONE TIME TOO MANY, YOU GET WHAT YOU *GET*.

NOT THAT I'M MAKIN' EXCUSES FOR THE GUY. FROM WHAT I COULD *TELL*--

--LOKI WAS A *REAL STINKER.*

WWWWKRRROOOOWWWW

I'VE NO DOUBT THE FIRE AND EXPLOSION WERE *HIS* DOING.

INDIRECTLY, OF COURSE. THE GUY'S THE *TRICKSTER GOD.* Y'KNOW--

"--BLOW UP THAT BUILDING AND I'LL GIVE YOU THIS COOKIE."

DISFIGURE AND MAIM A FEW HUNDRED PEOPLE, BLOW UP A NEW YORK LANDMARK--

--ALL TO ACCOMPLISH *ONE THING*--

--TO GET *ELVIS* TO LOSE THE *HAMMER.*

LOKI TOLD ME IF HIS BROTHER LOSES CONTACT WITH HIS HAMMER FOR *60 SECONDS,* HE'LL BECOME *MORTAL.*

SO, THE COOKIE WAS: LOOK FOR THE HAMMER, OR SAVE LIVES.

FOR HIM, THERE WAS NO QUESTION.

HE JUST KEPT DIGGING.

AND, FOR A MOMENT-- A REALLY BRIEF ONE--I ALMOST *JOINED* HIM.

MAYBE THE WHOLE "HERO" THING IS *CATCHING.* MAYBE I WANTED TO HEAR SOME *APPLAUSE.*

MAYBE IT WAS *TACO BELL.*

WHATEVER IT WAS, MY MOTIVES WERE ALL WRONG. I FELT REALLY ASHAMED--

BACK UP, MEATBALL.

--FOR ABOUT EIGHT SECONDS.

WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF HE BE WORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THOR.

"IF HE BE *WORTHY*," HUH?

THAT SOUNDED LIKE ANOTHER *SLAP* AT POOR LOKI. MAN, WHAT A *SCREWED-UP FAMILY* THAT MUST BE.

GOLDEN BOY STARTED TO FIGURE THINGS OUT.

FOR HIM, IT WAS A SELFISH MOMENT--TO EVEN *BRIEFLY* STOP TO CONSIDER THAT HE MIGHTA BEEN *SET UP.*

SPOTTING A GUY IN *BLACK TIGHTS* PROBABLY GAVE HIM A *HINT,* THOUGH.

SAVE THE FOLKS... CHASE THE VILLAIN...

A TOUGH CALL--

--ONE HE NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO *MAKE.*

SLAM

AND THAT WAS THE LAST I *SAW* OF HIM FOR AWHILE. WHICH WAS FINE WITH ME.

I MEAN, I JUST *INSTINCTIVELY* DIDN'T LIKE THE GUY.

ACTUALLY, I GUESS IT'D BE MORE ACCURATE TO SAY I DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY HE MADE ME *FEEL* ABOUT MYSELF.

HE WAS LIKE, THE "ANTI-ME."

HE WAS EVERYTHING I *WASN'T*. HE *HAD* EVERYTHING I *WANTED*.

WHOSOEVER THIS HAMMER WORTHY POSSESS THE

AND, FOR THAT *MOMENT*, I KNEW-- I MEAN, I REALLY *KNEW*--HOW LOKI GOT TO BE THE WAY HE WAS.

AND, FOR A FRACTION OF THAT MOMENT, HE REALLY WAS MY FATHER.

AND WE'D COME TO GET WHAT WAS *OURS*.

--

--IMPOSSI--

"IF HE BE *WORTHY*..."

WHAAM

AND THEN, JUST LIKE THAT--

--I FELT ALL BETTER.

JAKE--
JAKE--

--WHERE ARE YOU GOING--?! WHAT'S WRONG--?!

DID YOU SEE THAT--?

"GOD OF THUNDER, AND LORD OF STORMS..."

SEE WHAT--? THOR TAKING OFF--?

THAT'S NOT THOR.

BY THY LEAVE FAIR DAMSEL--

--BUT, HAVETH THOU ANY GREY POUPON--?

BEEKKK

...MUST LOSE O'ERMUCH IN THE TRANS-LATION

GOTTA TELL YA, BABE...

...IT WAS A REAL RUSH.

"WHITHER GOEST THOU ANON—?"

HMMM... BIG HAMMER... BIG CAPE...

"WADE WILSON —THOU NOW HAST THE HAMMER AND THE POWER OF THOR!"

...I KNOWETH JUST THE MOVE—

37 GORDITAS.

AND SOME CHIPS.

TACO BELL

NO THANKS.

I BROUGHT MY OWN.

STEEEEE-

SSNAAASSH

--AND GET THEE A LIFE!!

DO NOT MAKETH ME RETURN HENCE!!

...BY THE WAY, COULDST I HAVE THY AUTO-GRAPH—?

WHAM

BY OPRAH'S CHINS!

MINE HAMMER DOTH RETURN TO ME, AS THOUGH TWAS A BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL!

COOL.

Deadpool Corps

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

...WAITED ALL MINE LIFE TO SAY THAT...

COME-- LET US OFF!! LET US GO AVENGE SOME-THING!!

I'VE GOT IT, JARVIS!

A REPORTER OR A TOURIST COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN PAST THE GATE.

I WONDER WHO--

--AH--

--HAVE WE MET--?

KNOWETH THOU *NOT* HE WHO STANDETH BEFORE THEE, JUSTICE?!

I AM *THOR!*

NO YOU'RE NOT.

AM TOO.

ARE NOT.

AM *NOW.*

LET US SIMPLY SAY, THE *SOFTWARE* HAST BEEN *UPGRADED!*

HE WHO HOLDS SACRED MJOLNIR *IS* THOR, IS HE NOT—?

I'LL HAVE TO LOOK THAT UP... IN THE MEANWHILE, HOW ABOUT SOME I.D.?

THERE IS A *TIME* FOR SUCH THINGS, BROTHER! WHAT *SUPER-VILLAIN* DOTH WE MUST *BATTLE* TODAY--?

--BUT FIRST, HIGH ME TO THY NEAREST *LAVATORY!* THE SON OF THE MORNING MUST TAKE A--

—THOU *KNOWEST!*

I KNOW YOU'RE AN *IMPOSTER*-- AND I DEMAND TO KNOW *HOW* YOU'RE MAKING THIS HAPPEN!

GIVE ME THAT--!!

AND... *YOU* WOULD BE--?

THIS... THIS IS *MADNESS...*

WHICH EXPLAINETH *MUCH,* ACTUALLY.

YOU SEE— *NONE* OF THIS IS *ACTUALLY* HAPPENING—THERE IS A MAN—

OKAY-- OKAY--

--EXCUSE ME, BUT COULD YOU TWO POSSIBLY TAKE THE LUNATIC CONVENTION *OUTSIDE--?!*

BUT— WHAT ABOUT OUR GRAND BATTLES?!

AND, THE *BATH-ROOM--?!*

OUT!!

I THINKETH HE LIKETH US NOT.

...WOW... TRY SAYING THAT THREE TIMES FAST...

YOU STILL HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION.

HOW COULDST SUCH A MAN AS I BE WORTHY OF THE POWER OF THOR?! HOW ARROGANT OF THEE TO ASSUME O'ERMUCH!

WORTH IS RELATIVE! AND I AM A RELATIVE OF THE HOUSE OF ODIN--

--GIVE OR TAKE A TROLL OR TWO--

THIS... THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE...

MAYHAP THOU AREN'T QUITE SO WORTHY AS THOU THINKETH!

AND, SINCE THOU KNOWETH SO MUCH, WHY DOTH I NOW TALK LIKE SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE--?

--AND WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH MARILYN MANSON--?

*ENRAKT AND THE ENCHANTERS RECENTLY CAUSED THOR TO HAVE PROBLEMS WITH HIS HAMMER. SEE THOR #15-19. --ROO

IS THIS SOMEHOW [redacted] OF ENRAKT'S DOING*-- WAIT-- YOU SAID YOU WERE OF THE HOUSE OF ODIN--?

THE OUTHOUSE IS MAYHAP MORE APPROPRIATE...

WHO IS YOUR FATHER--?

I AM.

FFFWWWGGG

NEXT THING I KNEW, WE WERE BACK WHERE WE STARTED.

BREATHE SHALLOW.

TRY AND IGNORE THE TASTE...

LOKI!!

WHAT NEW BEDEVILMENT IS THIS?!? HAST THOU NOT WREAKED ENOUGH HAVOC THESE PAST DAYS?!?

ACTUALLY, NO.

IT SHALL NEVER BE ENOUGH, DEAR BROTHER.

I WISH TO LEAVE YOU WITH A TOKEN OF MY ESTEEM.

TO GIVE THEE THE SMALLEST TASTE OF WHAT I HAVE SUFFERED LO THESE MANY AGES. TO LET YOU FEEL AS I FEEL.

TO LOSE THY BIRTHRIGHT TO ANOTHER MORE WORTHY.

THOU SNOOZETH, THOU LOSETH.

THAT 'TWOULD BE ME.

WELL SAID, SON.

AND, NOW, LET US AWAY--

--BEHOLD THY BELOVED.

DEATH!!

BABY-- 'TIS WITH EXCEEDING JOY THAT I CAST MINE EYES UPON THEE--!!

--AM--

--BABY--?!

ALAS, MY SON--

--BUT, I FEAR SHE MAY NOW LOVE ANOTHER

AWAY FROM ME, DEMON--!

BUT...

...HOLDETH ON...

*NAMELY, HELA THE DEATH GODDESS, LOKI'S DAUGHTER. --BREVOORT, BUTTING IN

WOMEN ARE OF *TWAIN* MINDS, MY SON! AND I HAVE SOME... EXPERIENCE... WITH DEATH...*

THOU ART *WORTHY* NOW. MAYHAP *TOO* WORTHY FOR YON SPECTRE!

MAYHAP SHE NOW LOVETH HIM WHO WRITHES IN *DISGRACE!*

NEVER!!

THE SON OF *ODIN* SHALL *NEVER* BOW TO SUCH AS *THEE!!*

HOLDONASECONDETH.

THOU-- THOU--

--THIS WAS THY PLAN ALL *ALONG*--THOU CAREST *ONLY* TO *DESTROY* THINE OWN BROTHER--

--RATHER THAN TO EMBRACE THY *SON.*

SON...

...WHAT HARM IS THERE IN ACHIEVING *BOTH*--?

I AM.

AM *SO!*

THOU ART NOT MY FATHER.

AM NOT.

AM SO.

AM NOT!

AH-HAAAAHHH!

WHAM

SURELY THOU MUST THINK THE SON OF...WHOM-EVER I BE THE SON OF. TO BE *DUMB!*

TO SO *CRUELLY* USE *ME*-- WITHOUT MEETING MY DISCOUNT *DAY RATE*--IS *ONE* THING--

--BUT TO *USURP* THE *LOVE* OF A *GOOD WOMAN*--IS *CRIMINAL!!*

AND THUS DO I *SURRENDER* YON URU HAMMER TO HIM WHO IS *TRULY WORTHY*--!!

FINALLY!!!

NOW, LET THE *HEAVENS SING*-- LET ALL *ASGARD, MIDGARD,* AND THE REALMS *IN BETWEEN* LOUDLY *PROCLAIM*--

--?!?

ODIN'S *BLOOD*-- THIS *CANNOT* BE--!!

--I COULD NOT *HEAR* THEE O'ER THE *SINGING HEAVENS.*

THE MIGHTY THOR IS *NO MORE.* THOU ART *NO LONGER* WORTHY--

--AND THOU HAST BEEN *DELIVERED* INTO THE HANDS OF *DEATH.* ALL TOLD, A *BUSY* HOUR!

AND, AS FOR *THEE,* MY SON--

--I SEE YOU STILL HAVE NEED OF MANY *LIFE LESSONS!* THERE-FORE SHALL THY FATHER *TEACH THEE!!*

A *CURSE* UPON THEE!! LET THY LIFE FALL INTO *RUIN* UNTIL THOU DOST SEEK THY FATHER'S FORGIVENESS!!

MY *APOLOGIES,* DEAR BROTHER--

AND, NOW, LOKI SHALL TAKE HIS *LEAVE*--

--AS MY JOY IS NOW FULL!"

THIS...IS MADNESS.

AGREED

AND, OF MADNESS, I KNOWETH MUCH.

HOW COULD I NO LONGER BE WORTHY...? FATHER... WHAT HAVE I DONE...

AWAY FROM ME, WRETCH!

HEY-- HEY--HEY!! SHE IS MERELY DOING HER JOB!

TAKE DEEP BREATHS, FRIEND--DO WHAT I DO: REMIND THYSELF--

--NONE OF THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING.

AHHHHHH--!!

SEE? THOU ART FEELING BETTER ALREADY!

REPEAT AFTER ME: THERE IS A MAN...WITH A TYPEWRITER...

NO--NO, IDIOT--!!

WE MUST HIE BACK TO MIDGARD!!

EARTH!! WE MUST RETURN TO EARTH!!

FINE.

WHAT DOES "HIE" MEAN--?

OK.

AH

THAT WAY!

I UNDERSTANDETH NOT--

--WHICH, TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, IS NOTHING NEW--

'TWAS WHAT THOU SAID-- THAT THIS WAS AN ILLUSION--

NOT EXACTLY WHAT I SAID, BUT ALL RIGHTY THENETH

E'EN THE ELDRITCH SPELLS OF LOKI COULD NOT USURP THE ETERNAL POWER OF MY FATHER!!

BUT LOKI DID AND LIKELY DID CONCEAL MJOLNIR FROM MINE EYES!!

BUT-- DON'TEITH I HAVE MUJEEBUR?

SO 'TWOULD APPEAR. HOWE'ER, THE SON OF THE MORNING IS PERSUADED--

--THAT MY FATHER'S WORDS ARE *TRUE*--

--THOUGH ALL OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE *UNIVERSE* MAY BE *LIARS!!*

THIS DAY'S *MOCKERY* ENDS *NOW!*

LET THIS MORTAL SHELL GIVE *WAY*—

--TO

THOR the mighty

THUNOR

AT LAST, THE SON OF ODIN IS *FREE* OF THE EVIL ONE'S FOUL *TRICKERY!!*

CLEARLY, THINE "HAMMER" IS A *FORGERY*—POSSIBLY THE SAME FORGED OF GENUINE URU METAL BY *HARDKIN*—CREATED TO *CONFOUND* ME!*

YES...AND NONE COULDST BE *HAPPIER*...

...OUCHETH...

*THOR VI #365-366. --ROO

--AND THE *REST* IS SIMPLE *COSMETICS*—!!

CLEARLY, LOKI MEANS TO *DISTRACT* ME MOMENTARILY FROM HIS *CURRENT* SCHEME AGAINST MY FATHER'S *THRONE!!**

NOW WHAT REMAINS IS ONLY TO *SMITE* YON *HARLEQUIN* OF *DEATH*—!!

*SEE CURRENT ISSUES OF *THOR*. --ROO

'TIS A SIMPLE MATTER TO SUCH AS LOKI TO BORROW A *SPELL* THAT WOULD ENABLE THE FORGERY TO *FLY* AS MJOLNIR FLIES--

I SAY THEE—

NAY!

SHOOOOWW

BEGONE, IMPOSTER—MY QUARREL IS *NOT* WITH THEE—!

SHE IS A SPIRIT--A SHADE—COMPOSED OF EVIL!

THOU SPEAKETH OF THAT WHICH THOU *KNOWETH NOT*--!!

'TIS AS YOU INTEND *HARM* TO *SHE* WHOM *WADE* LOVETH!!

BY THE WAY...

...CAN I *KEEP* THIS...?

...I DO WISH I HAD KNOWN URU METAL SPARKED LIKE THAT...

KLAANGG!

SO BE IT!!

THWAK

...SHOULDST BE *INSTRUCTIONS* ENGRAVED THEREON...

HAVE AT THEE!!

BAH!*

TO THINK I ACTUALLY *ADMIRED* THEE!

BRAVE-- HANDSOME-- *BELOVED*--

...NOT THAT I ACTUALLY *NOTICED* THE "HANDSOME" PART, BUT, I *DIGRESSETH*...

*CR PES ... ROD

THOU ART AS THY *BROTHER* HATH SAID--HAUGHTY, SELFISH, HIGH-MINDED--!!

--AND, SAY, WHAT *CRÈME RINSE* DO YOU USE--?

IT IS AS LOKI HATH SAID! THE SPOILED AND REVERED WORTHY SON!

THOU ART NOT *WORTHY* OF MY BELOVED *DEATH!* YEA, THO' I DO NOT *SLAY THEE*, STILL THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST NEEDS BE TAUGHT HUMILITY--

--AND *DEADPOOL* IS JUST THE MAN TO *TEACHETHETHETH THEE--!!*

PREPARE THEE NOW THEREFORE-- FOR THE *FULL-FLUNG, UNBRIDLED WRATH OF*--

AND, BABE--

--THAT WAS PRETTY MUCH *IT.*

MISTER... HEY-- *MISTER--*

--C'MON *BACK.* THAT'S RIGHT--THERE YA GO.

THOUGHT WE *LOST* YOU, FOR A MINUTE.

--HUH--? WHERE'S-- WHERE'S THE BIG *GALOOT?!*

WHO? WE JUST *GOT* HERE AND FOUND *YOU.*

--I SEE. I, AH-- AHEM--I MUSTA *SCARED* HIM *OFF.*

WELL, IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* ME--I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM--

HOME.

IF I COULD ACTUALLY STILL *CALL* IT THAT, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED,

234

231

YOU WERE GONE-- THOR WAS GONE--

IT WAS LIKE *NONE* OF THAT HAD ACTUALLY *HAPPENED.*

THAT'S WHEN I REMEMBERED LOKI'S CURSE. I FIGURED-- HOW *BAD* COULD IT *BE--?*

--THEN I FOUND *OUT.*

NEXT

JOHNNY HANDSOME

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE WEIRD

DEADLINES

FRANK DUNKERLEY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

RUBEN DIAZ
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
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OK, gang, welcome to DEADLINES. Before we start, let us just shout out a big "Thank you" and "We're Sorry" to Brad Vancata who did some great inking over Andy Smith in issue #35. Unfortunately, we neglected to mention Brad's name in that issue's credits, so once again, "Thanks, Brad." Now, on to your questions and comments.

Deadlines Crew,

Indulge me, if you will, in a momentary flashback. The time: a scant few weeks ago. The place: my local comic shop. As the cashier was ringing up my books he gave a relieved sigh and said something to the effect of "finally, someone with taste." I glanced over my shoulder to see a store full of energetic little children and haggard parents, all clamoring to get the newest Poke'mon merchandise. So, apparently, the clientele that week had not been of the usual high fanboy standard. Needless to say, I was feeling pretty good about myself and my refined comic palate. That is, until he got to my issue of Deadpool. "Ohhhh," he said, "I'm going to have to deduct points for Deadpool." I was speechless! A seemingly intelligent comic connoisseur was making fun of one of the best books on the market. My jaw nearly dropped. I wanted to extol the virtues of my favorite merc from on high, but the only argument I could muster was a feeble: "but Joe Kelly's the man." That got no argument so I left, my wallet thinner and my ego slightly bruised. Not letting that clerk influence me (and trying to reassure myself), I cracked open my new issue. But, what do I find: Joe Kelly is LEAVING! Uh-oh. That counter-jockey was going to have the last laugh after all. End flashback.

Present day: I just finished issue #34. Why was I even worried? You guys have thoroughly impressed this fan. I have enjoyed Mr. Priest's past work (and took pleasure in seeing the infamous Goat on page 4), but was worried whether or not his humor would fit the tone of this book. Well, he hit Deadpool at full-stride, and I have a feeling he's just getting started. The writing was crisp and the art was breathtaking. But, please remember to keep balancing the wisecracks with a dark edge. Deadpool is so intriguing because he's not just a cut and dry "hero." His decision to do good in the world is a conscious choice and a constant struggle. Humor is the only thing keeping his true madness at bay. Oh, but what glorious twisted humor it is. I like the status that Bullseye has been given in the book as a real adversary. Can we expect a crossover with Daredevil anytime soon? Just think what a few issues penned by Kevin Smith could do for your sales! (And his genius with pop-culture-inspired witty repartee would really shine coming from Deadpool's foul mouth.)

Well, thanks for listening to my rambling diatribe. Keep on breaking down that fourth wall and creating such high quality work, True Believers, and I'll keep trying to win over jaded cashiers!

Jordan Lowe
Lowell, OH

Thanks for backing up DEADPOOL, Jordan, but remember "a true master need never unsheathe his sword." Think about it.

And Kevin Smith — doesn't that guy write movies?

Deadlines,

I approached #34 with a certain degree of caution. A new editor not that many issues previous was a big creative change. But a new writer, especially one having to fill the exceptionally large shoes left by Joe Kelly, that was "the" change. I had read a few issues of Mr. Priest's work but had mainly come across him through reputation. And it's not a bad one at that. But this is Deadpool. A title, which despite its obvious humorous prose and overtones, may deep down be the most serious book in the Marvel Universe. A tragic character, forever trying to forget the sins of the past but being reminded at every turn.

Would Mr. Priest continue this or would he start his own interpretation? I'm delighted to say it's the former. And what a great read it was, full of funny moments but retaining the deep overtones we have come to expect. The "I find myself oddly aroused" line was an absolute gem and I hope this much care is put in the dialogue for all future issues.

One thing that I personally feel is important is to give the stories somewhere to head towards. On Joe Kelly's run we had three definite story arcs: the 'rise' and subsequent 'fall', the L,L & L saga, and finally the T-Ray saga which tied up a lot of loose plot threads. These sort of arcs gave the book direction and enabled the reader to really feel that we were seeing Wade's life unfold stage by stage.

One final note, let's get a definite art team on the book. Too many artists give the book an unsettled feel and it's time to decide on and stick to one artist. My vote goes to the underrated Pete Woods.

Here's wishing Mr. Priest a great and long tenure on Deadpool.

Richard Wright
Abingdon, England

Priest is with us for the foreseeable future, Richard. As for artists — first off, hope you enjoyed the fantastic work of Jim Calafiore and Mark McKenna on this very issue — they really did a great job in a crunch to lend ol' DEADPOOL a scheduling hand. As for next issue, prepare yourself for the debut of the powerful Paco Diaz and John Holdredge. We've seen Paco strut his stuff in some previous issues, but starting next month he has the spotlight to himself. And let us just say that he uses the limelight appropriately.

Hello Deadpool!

I have just read Deadpool #34. If Christopher Priest can continue to write like this, then I am sure that Deadpool is in safe hands!

I enjoyed seeing Bullseye again but I REALLY enjoyed the framing sequence! With the departure of Joe Kelly I have been worried that the cancellation of Deadpool cannot be far behind. Christopher Priest addressed my fears in an entertaining way and I now feel that he IS the man for the job. DO NOT let him go!

And all you Deadpool fans out there... Keep buying Deadpool! By the way... just who is that generic scientist?

Make mine Deadpool!

Narinder Singh Basra
Cambridge, England

Well, Narinder Singh Basra, we forwarded your letter to Deadpool himself; he said, "Did you guys ever read that silent issue of G.I. JOE? How cool is Snake Eyes? And Storm Shadow?! And those tattoos?!?"

And that generic scientist was Loki, as we revealed at the end of issue #36.

Dear Deadlines,

I'm going to be brief because this book has been, and remains, my favorite. Creative changes haven't stopped the merc-with-the-mouth. But just one thing: Weasel, Weasel, WEASEL!

Roger Delaney
Langhorne, PA

Watch it, Roger. Name-calling just isn't nice, you platypus.

NEXT ISSUE

DEADPOOL GETS HANDSOME! EASY, LADIES! (BUT RUBEN'S SINGLE--THOUGH NOT QUITE AS PRETTY.)

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